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THE NAE STORY
(A HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICALS)

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Divinity

by
Robert Dean Wood
May 1955

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Approved

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Asbury Theological Seminary

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INTRODUCTION

One wonders if the Saviour foresaw the multitudinous segments of His Church when He prayed the Father ". . . that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Various attempts at oneness have been made ever since the cleavage between the Eastern and the Western branches of Christendom in the early centuries of the Church. This paper tells one such story. That men of strong convictions, as evangelicals are, should be able to unite on a doctrinal basis for the purpose of united action is no mean accomplishment. The results of their union compose a new and glorious chapter in the history of the Christian Church.

Of course, one's concept and appreciation of the work of the NAE is limited by the perspective from which he must view it. The Association is but an infant in years, but in growth and maturity it has attained to adulthood. Because of the short distance at which the writer stands from his subject, it may be too fair to make an accurate appraisal of its effectiveness.

The author is deeply appreciative of the cooperation of the various persons who have had a part in this work. To Dr. James DeForest Murch and his staff for making available back issues of United Evangelical Action, to Miss

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Robert Dean Wood

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CHAPTER I

VENTURES IN ECUMENICITY PRIOR TO 1942

In the light of circumstances prior to 1942 and to a lesser degree since, it was inevitable that an association of evangelicals should be organized. Since 1908 when the Federal Council of Churches was formed, American Protestantism officially had had a united voice. This was the consummation, in a sense, of a dream of many. In another sense, it was only the beginning of that for which many others hoped and worked, i.e., a world-wide council of churches. The difficulty with the FCC, as conceived in the minds of some evangelicals, lay in the fact that the Council no longer was a true representative of American Protestantism. In other words, that great and growing segment of Bible believing Christians had lost what influence and leadership they had possessed in the FCC. Liberal churchmen were in the saddle and had run off with the steed; now finally the hounds of orthodoxy were nipping at their heels.

The grievances which were held shall be investigated later in the paper. Suffice it to say here that the problems and injustices were great. For this reason, the National Association of Evangelicals was organized. Before investigating the providences which brought the NAE about, it perhaps might be profitable to note the history of union and cooperation among evangelical Christians in the United States.

Modern ecumenicity was first conceived by orthodox Christians.

Among the earliest movements in modern times for concord among evangelical Christians was a grand and bold scheme (and indeed visionary, it must be confessed) of the early nineteenth century. The four great names in this adventure in union were Barton W. Stone, Thomas and Alexander Campbell, and Walter Scott. All had been Presbyterians. It was their purpose to effect a merger of Protestant bodies thus establishing one Protestant Church. But, alas, out of it came another denomination which in turn has seen division upon division and the formation of still more sects. Campbell sought restoration of the New Testament polity and ideal. No schism should be among the churches, he declared, and sought to bring about a union among believers. These four men

aim[ed] to simplify the complexities of Christian faith and [to] go back of the creeds and traditional practices of existing churches to the plain teaching of the New Testament. They believed . . . that the divisions of Christendom would disappear if Christians would only agree to speak as the apostles spoke and to do as they did.¹

These fantasists felt that in areas of opinion, the citizens of this ecclesiastical utopia should exercise liberty in non-essentials and that no warrant for episcopacy could be found in Scripture.

¹ Winfred Ernest Garrison, An American Religious Movement (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1947), p. 9.

The American Bible Society was formed in the Gordon Street Dutch Reformed Church, New York City, in 1816. A great many men of note were present, among whom were Lyman Beecher, Jedidiah Morse, and James Fenimore Cooper. The need for an association dedicated to the publication and circulation of the Bible without comment was felt to be pressing. The resolution which brought the Society into being was passed without a dissenting vote despite the fact that it was an interdenominational gathering.

An address to the people of the United States concerning the formation of the society was prepared by Dr. John M. Mason, a minister and Provost of Columbia College. In the message, he declared,

'Local feelings, party prejudices, sectarian jealousies are excluded by its very nature. It is leagued in that, and that alone, which calls up every hallowed and puts down every unhallowed principle: the dissemination of the Scriptures. . . .'²

He amplified his statement by adding, "' . . . sectarian littleness and rivalries can find no avenue of admission.'³

It is usually agreed that 1780 is the year in which the Sunday School began. It was then that Robert Raikes gathered the poor urchins of Gloucester, England, and taught

² Henry Otis Dwight, The Centennial History of the American Bible Society (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916), I, 28.

³ Loc. cit.

them. It is believed that the first Sunday School established in the United States was in 1785. In 1790 a society for the promotion of the movement was established in Philadelphia. The name was changed in 1824 from The Sunday and Adult School Union to the American Sunday School Union, the purpose of the Union being to establish a Sunday School wherever there were people, to provide and circulate religious publications, to aid teachers and other religious workers. The society was constituted of members of several denominations. Foundational principles were "the essential truths of Protestant Christianity held in common by all Evangelical denominations."⁴ The basis of union required that ". . . 'all discordant elements must be banished,' and that 'union with Christ and union with each other form the basis of the American Sunday School Union.'⁵ It was added that "We can maintain the integrity of our relations to our respective churches and communities, while we can unite to teach the truth that Christ taught and as plainly as he taught it."⁶

. . . experience in the Union 'has satisfactorily demonstrated that the grand leading principle on which this National Association was originally based--an union of

⁴ Edwin W. Rice, The American Sunday School Movement and The American Sunday School Union (Philadelphia: American Sunday School Union, 1917), p. 80, citing American Sunday School Magazine, July 1824, p. 5.

⁵ Loc. cit.

⁶ Loc. cit.

the great and cardinal points of Christian belief, is as practicable in operation as it is noble in purpose. . . .⁷

Other orthodox interdenominational societies organized the first third of the century past include The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (1810); The American Home Missionary Society (1826); The American Education Society, to provide education for prospective ministers (1815); The American Tract Society. Evangelism was the underlying purpose for these associations. Others were The American Society for the Promotion of Temperance (1826); The American Peace Society (1828); and The American Antislavery Society (1833). The purpose of these was reform. Donald H. Yoder has said, "The significance of these societies in the total history of the ecumenical movement is manifold."

The formation of the Evangelical Alliance in 1846 in London was the boldest of all the early ecumenical movements. Fifty-two denominations united on a doctrinal basis "To afford opportunity for members of the Church of Christ to cultivate brotherly love, enjoy Christian intercourse, and promote such other objects as they may hereafter agree to

⁷ Historical Sketch, p. 9; Report, 1828, p. 5, cited by Rice, loc. cit.

⁸ Ruth Rouse and Stephen C. Neill, editors, A History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954, p. 235.

prosecute together.'"⁹ Without doubt, its most lasting contribution was the appointment of a Universal Week of Prayer which is still observed.

The original plan was to have seven branches of their work: in the United States; Great Britain and Ireland; France, Belgium, and French Switzerland; North Germany, South Germany, and German Switzerland; British North America; and the West Indies. The Evangelical Alliance, which in the Twentieth Century became known as the World's Evangelical Alliance, was not formed in this country until after the War between the States, because of the clause prohibiting slavery. At the organizational meeting in the United States in 1867, this statement was issued:

'Resolved, That in forming an Evangelical Alliance for the United States in cooperative union with other branches of the Alliance, we have no intention to give rise to a new denomination; or to effect an amalgamation of Churches, except in the way of facilitating personal Christian intercourse and a mutual good understanding; or to interfere in any way whatever with the internal affairs of the various denominations; but simply to bring individual Christians into closer fellowship and cooperation, on the basis of the spiritual union which already exists in the vital relation with Christ. . . .'¹⁰

This statement of purpose is quite to the contrary of the

⁹ William Adams Brown, Toward A United Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946), p. 27.

¹⁰ S. M. Jackson, editor, The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1950), IV, 222.

alleged intent of the NCC and the WCC supporters to establish a super-church.

These latterly mentioned have not allowed the same "mistake" to be made in the formation of these Councils as was done so utterly indiscreetly by the founders of EA. That is, it is their contention that the doctrinal basis of the Alliance limited its membership to a small segment of Christendom. Be that as it may, it must be confessed that the Alliance gradually declined in influence.

As outlined by Yoder,¹¹ the difference between the FCC and the EA had many facets: (1) the FCC was a meeting of church groups with official church sanction as opposed to ". . . a scattered convention of interested individuals from various denominations." (2) The Alliance was low church and anti-Roman Catholic, while the FCC desired the cooperation of high church Protestants and Orthodox Churches; (3) the social interests of the FCC.

Two years before the Evangelical Alliance loomed on the ecumenical horizon, England was the locale for the advent of another movement which was destined to become world-wide and which also cut across denominational lines. The YMCA appeared in 1844 and came to America in 1851 where it spread rapidly among collegiates. Its purpose was to

¹¹ Rouse and Neill, op. cit., p. 257.

'seek to unite those young men, who, regarding Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour, according to the Holy Scriptures, desire to be his disciples . . . and to associate their efforts for the extension of his kingdom among young men.¹²

What came to be known as the Evangelical Test was enforced, making it imperative that only those who confessed faith in Christ as divine Redeemer and who were members in good standing in evangelical churches could exercise the voting privilege in the Association.

At the Portland convention of the "Y" in 1869, the word "evangelical" was defined thus:

'We hold those churches to be evangelical, which, maintaining the Holy Scriptures to be the only infallible rule of faith and practise, do believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (the only-begotten of the Father, King of kings, and Lord of lords, in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and who was made sin for us, though knowing no sin, bearing our sins in his own body on the tree), as the only name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved from everlasting punishment.'¹³

It is lamentable indeed that that noble work has so far departed from its original purpose.

Other interdenominational societies were designed especially for the young people. The growth of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, founded by the Reverend Francis E. Clark in 1881 for the youth of his

¹² Jackson, XII, 461.

¹³ Loc. cit.

Portland, Maine, church is astounding. This fellowship likewise insisted on fundamental Christian principles.

"No voluntary movement has been more powerful in its effects in drawing the churches together than the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions," asserts Ruth Rouse.¹⁴ It was begun at the first student Christian conference which was held at Mt. Hermon, Massachusetts, in 1886. There a hundred students pledged themselves for foreign missionary service. Approximately 20,500 students had gone out because of the influence of the Volunteers by 1945. Their slogan was "The Evangelization of the World in This Generation." The Movement is now the missionary arm of the Student Christian Movement.

Dr. Latourette contends that the modern ecumenical movement began at the missionary conference in Edinburgh in 1910.¹⁵

Reference has been made to the Federal Council of Churches. Elias B. Sanford (1843-1932) was the driving force behind the formulation of the plans for and the formation of the FCC. In 1905, the Inter-Church Conference on Federation was held in Carnegie Hall, New York City, where the constitu-

¹⁴ Rouse and Neill, op. cit., p. 328.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 362.

tion was drawn up for the Council. It came into being in 1908. The purpose for it as stated in the constitution was (1) to express the fellowship and catholic unity of the Christian Church; (2) to bring the Christian bodies of America into united service for Christ and the world; (3) to encourage devotional fellowship and mutual counsel concerning the spiritual life and religious activities of the Churches; (4) to secure a larger combined influence for the Churches of Christ in all matters affecting the moral and social condition of the people so as to promote the application of the law of Christ in every relation of human life; and (5) to assist in the organization of local branches of the Federal Council to promote its aims in their communities. Social action was a primary concern of the FCC; its members felt, and no doubt justifiably so, that the churches had failed to lay enough stress on the responsibility of the Church to society in this regard.

As noted above, liberalism was in full control of the FCC by the late Twenties, and it came more and more to represent but one segment of American Protestantism.

By the time the NAE was organized in 1942, two other ecumenical movements had appeared. The International Missionary Council was formed at Lake Mohonk, New York, October 1921. Subsequent meetings of IMC were held at Jerusalem (1928) and Madras (1938). The first meeting of the Faith and Order

Movement convened at Lausanne in 1927 and later at Edinburgh (1937). The Life and Work Movement was begun in Geneva in 1920 with the first World Conference at Stockholm (1925) and a succeeding assemblage at Oxford (1937). These three streams converged with others to form the World Council of Churches, the first Assembly of which was scheduled for 1941 to be held in the United States; it was delayed because of the war. This was to have been the organizing Assembly.

The other ecumenical movement preceding the NAE, the American Council of Christian Churches, was but a fledgling which had only recently left the nest but which was already making clerical feathers fly, while the NAE was yet ineubating. Some united orthodox forces were needed, it was felt, to challenge the FCC. Therefore, in 1941, the Bible Protestant Church (formerly within the Methodist Protestant Church but which protested the union in 1939 of the three uniting bodies of Methodism) and the Bible Presbyterian Church (which came out of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A.) met in New York City, adopted a constitution and set out to conquer worlds.

It was decided to enter the same areas of activity as the ones in which the FCC worked. The ACCC has carried its program of parrotism too far, in that frequently wherever the FCC and its successor the National Council and the World Council plan their assemblies, the ACCC and its international

arm, the International Council of Christian Churches (formed 1948), roost there too. For example, the latter organization was instituted in Amsterdam a few days before the WCC; it was impossible for the ICCC to meet in Evanston simultaneously with the WCC in 1954 so the former convened at the same time in another place.

Only those groups which were without the fold of the FCC were to be admitted to membership in the ACCC. This principle was carried to the point that even one whose denomination was affiliated with either the FCC or the WCC, though the individual might not be, was refused voting privileges. Local churches of denominations belonging to the FCC were allowed to maintain an associate or consultative relationship with the ACCC. These, too, were denied the right to vote. Back of this was the rigid principle of separation which the American Council maintains.

The Reverend Ralph T. Davis of the Africa Inland Mission sent out in the winter of 1940-41 a letter to a number of conservative Christian leaders to ascertain the amount of interest abroad in the land in united action among evangelicals. The Reverend J. Elwin Wright toured thirty-one states in the spring of 1941 to discuss the matter with various men, men who were leaders in their churches. The result was a meeting at Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, October 27-28, 1941.

Present at that meeting were Dr. William Ward Ayer, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, New York City; Dr. T. J. Bach, secretary of the Scandinavian Alliance; Mr. H. C. Crowell of Moody; Reverend Mr. Davis; Mr. Horace F. Dean, vice-president of the Philadelphia School of the Bible; Dr. V. R. Edman, president of Wheaton College; Dr. Charles E. Fuller of the Old Fashioned Revival Hour; Dr. Will F. Houghton, president of Moody; Dr. Harry Ironside, pastor of Moody Church; Dr. Stephen W. Paine, president of Houghton College; Dr. Charles A. Porter, associate pastor of Moody Church; Dr. Ernest M. Wadsworth, secretary of the Great Commission Prayer League; and Reverend Mr. Wright.

Representing the ACCC were Messrs. Carl McIntire, McAllister Griffiths, and Harold S. Laird. These men felt that only one evangelical organization in opposition to the FCC should exist. However, they were unable to go along with the proposed program because, as McIntire said, ". . . we saw that they were not in full accord with the clear-cut position of the American Council on separation from the Federal Council"16 It should be added in passing that the obstreperous Mr. McIntire still scrapes and thumps on that same worm-eaten string usque ad nauseam. Neither does the ACCC approve of the presence of the Pentecostal sects within the NAE.

16 Carl McIntire, Twentieth Century Reformation (Collingswood, New Jersey: Christian Beacon Press, 1945), p. 199.

At this meeting at Moody, it was decided to call a National Conference for United Action Among Evangelicals at the Hotel Coronado, St. Louis, for April 7-9, 1942. A committee headed up by Mr. Wright was appointed for the purpose of organization. There in St. Louis nearly two hundred evangelical leaders from thirty-four denominations assembled under the chairmanship of Mr. Wright. In addressing them, he declared,

. . . if we build something worthwhile, it must be upon a definite doctrinal basis sufficiently broad to include all groups which have remained faithful to the great doctrines of the Church. . . . It must at the same time, be narrow enough to exclude those who have rejected the authority of God's Holy Word.¹⁷

Dr. Harold J. Ockenga, pastor of Park Street Congregational Church, Boston, gave three keynote addresses at the Conference. He asserted that evangelical Christianity had for decades known nothing but defeat after defeat. He challenged the group with these words:

If the children of this world are wiser than the children of light, then it is time for the children of light to open their eyes and learn how to carry on God's work. This is the time, the day for the offensive. Personally I am . . . tired of defensive tactics in ecclesiastical matters. . . .¹⁸

He added, ". . . our defensive tactics threaten to be . . .

¹⁷ n.n., Evangelical Action (Boston: United Action Press, 1942), p. 14.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 25.

fatal to us. . . ."19

A committee drew up a tentative constitution and a constitutional convention was scheduled to be held in Chicago in April, 1943. The nominating Committee submitted names for officers, for the Executive Committee, and for the Committee of Twenty-five. The following were chosen officers: Dr. Ockenga, President; Dr. R. J. Bateman, Memphis, Tennessee, First Vice-president; Bishop Leslie R. Marston, Greenville, Illinois, Second Vice-president; the Reverend Ralph T. Davis, Brooklyn, Secretary; Mr. H. J. Taylor, Chicago, Treasurer. A budget for not less than six thousand dollars nor more than ten thousand dollars was proposed and adopted for the coming year. The National Association of Evangelicals for United Action was the name chosen for the new organization.

The Committee on Policy recommended that the NAE should work in the following areas:

1. Relations with Government
2. National Use of Radio
3. Public Relations
4. Evangelism
5. Preservation of the Principle of Separation of Church and State
6. Home and Foreign Missions
7. United Effort of Evangelical Churches within Local Communities
8. Christian Education

Because the organizing group represented a small segment of evangelical Christians, several one day area meetings were

19 Evangelical Action, p. 25.

planned. Covering the nation, the meetings were to be held, before the next Convention, in New York City, Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Pierre, South Dakota, Seattle, and Carson City, Nevada.²⁰

The NAE in its organization sought to maintain a mediating policy between the liberal FCC on the one hand and Pharisaic and factional groups on the other.

With the adoption of the following statement at the recommendation of the Committee on Policy, the NAE was launched.

Realizing the apostasy of our time, and realizing that in many areas of Christian endeavor the organizations which now purport to be the representatives of Protestant Christianity have departed from the faith of Jesus Christ, we do now reaffirm our unqualified loyalty to this gospel as hereinunder set forth, we declare our unwillingness to be represented by organizations who do not possess such loyalty to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and we express our unqualified opposition to all such apostacy. And in this loyalty to the evangelical Christian faith and opposition to all apostacy, we do hereby write our testimony in an organization which we propose shall be worthy to represent us as Bible-believing Christians. . . .²¹

And thus the Rubicon was crossed!

²⁰ Ibid., p. 69 et passim.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 107f.

CHAPTER II

GREAT OAKS FROM LITTLE ACORNS

As in any infant organization, new problems constantly arose to harass the well-born Association. Of these, no doubt the most pressing was that of money. A budget not to exceed ten thousand dollars for the year was adopted at the St. Louis meeting. Ten months later in January, 1943, the Budget Committee voted to raise the meagre amount to twenty-four thousand dollars. Growth had been rapid, the offices were inadequately staffed, promotional literature and the publication of a paper were devouring the limited funds, larger headquarters were needed. Gradually money came in, the work expanded and continues to expand with each passing year. It was reported at the Cleveland Convention in 1954 that NAE and its associated agencies had raised over a half million dollars for its work of the fiscal year past.

Soon after the St. Louis meeting, the Association began publishing a paper, United Evangelical Action, with Dr. John A. Huffman as Editor. The first issue was dated August 1, 1942. UEA is the official organ of the National Association of Evangelicals; however, editorial opinion does not necessarily reflect the judgments of the Association as a body. Dr. James DeForest March became Editor in the spring of 1945 while the office was in Boston. The following July editorial offices were moved to Cincinnati where they are presently. Under the

leadership of Dr. Murch, UEA has continued to grow until by 1948, it was reaching about thirty-six thousand readers.

The Report of the 1951 Convention stated that

Reprints of its UEA leading articles and editorials have reached hundreds of thousands beyond UEA's circulation and it is constantly quoted in college and seminary seminars, official gatherings of the WCC, IMC, NCCUSA, the AGCC, the ICCG and many denominations. The religious news service has recognized UEA as giving the most complete news coverage of the evangelical world.¹

Chicago was chosen as the site for the first annual convention--the Constitutional Convention. It convened at the La Salle Hotel May 4-7, 1943. Five hundred delegates, as compared with one hundred seventy at the St. Louis meeting a year before, assembled representing sixty-three denominations. Two years before fifteen people had met in the same city to discuss the possibility of such a united front for evangelicals. How rapidly it had taken hold!

At the assembly, a constitution was adopted containing a statement of purpose, a statement of faith, provisions of membership, a list of officers, provision for a Board of Administration, for incorporation of the Association, for by-laws, for amendments, for special affiliated organizations, etc. A budget of a hundred fifty thousand dollars was accepted for the ensuing year. It was to be raised for the most part

¹ n.n., "The NAE Faces Issues in National Crisis (A Report of the Ninth Annual Convention in Chicago)," United Evangelical Action, 10:29, May 1, 1951

by contributions.

Officers elected for the year were Harold J. Ockenga, president; Bishop Leslie R. Marston, first vice-president; Judge John W. McCall, second vice-president; J. Willison Smith, secretary; and H. J. Taylor, treasurer.

Plans were formulated to divide the nation into seven regions with district secretaries responsible to a national board of administration, the reason being to bring down to the grass roots level the aims of and reasons for united evangelical action. Activities were planned to run parallel with efforts of the Federal Council of Churches.

While counteraction to the FCC was a rather negative idea, it was to be done through positive approaches. The November, 1942, issue of UEA listed these areas in which the NAE should engage:

1. To fill pulpits with evangelical men now that the war had created a shortage of preachers for the first time in a decade.
2. To provide in every large city, especially embarkation ports, a gospel center for service men.
3. To encourage the establishment of day nurseries for children of working mothers. Christian teaching would take the place of their former occupation--running the streets.

In another issue, September 1, 1942, a statement was made that no activity of NAE was so important as the taking

of the Gospel to the masses with the least possible delay.

In the very first issue of UEA, Dr. Ockenga reiterated this healthful positive attitude. He declared that the millions who are not associated with the PCC are not interested in making indictments or attacking anyone but that they desired a positive, unified, and aggressive program of action in the areas of evangelism, missions, Christian education, Gospel broadcasting, and other realms relative to the Christian faith.

The formation of the NAE was not happily greeted by the Christian Century. Soon after the Constitutional Convention, this leading religious journal came out with the following editorial:

In the formation of the National Association of Evangelicals for United Action, the atomistic sectarianism which has long been the scandal of Protestantism appears to be receiving a new lease on life . . . several hundred representatives of the sects which hitherto have refused to cooperate with their fellow Protestants on anything, met . . . to set-up a structure of unified endeavor. Allied with them were representatives of several of the larger denominations. These included dissident Baptists, Disciples, Presbyterians and Congregationalists. While they differ among themselves on many things, these self styled 'Evangelicals' are united in their opposition to the Federal Council of Churches and in differing degrees to the other associated agencies of interchurch cooperation . . . what the organizers of this new movement seek is therefore not representation within a united Protestantism but control of one segment of a divided Protestantism. Their emphasis upon the opportunities which they anticipate will be opened to them in radio, in the appointment of chaplains and in representing millions of Protestants before the public in other capacities, gives them away. They have seized upon this moment when the cooperative agencies are in process of a larger integration to make a bid for power under the aegis of a revised

sectarianism.²

While the editor of The Christian Century felt that the NAE was not needed and most certainly not wanted, all did not feel that way. That it met a great need is a fact supported by its growth in numbers and influence. J. Elwin Wright, writing three years later asserted,

Twenty-five denominations, having a total membership of 25,000,000 are affiliated with the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America. More than 235 other denominations have no affiliation with that body.³

The expansion of the Association was phenomenal. By the time of the second annual convention in Columbus in 1944, the membership numbered 754,135. Fifteen denominations belonged and hundreds of individual churches of other denominations. Thirty-eight regional and state conferences had been held during the year to acquaint the public with the NAE. An office had been opened in Washington in September, 1943, to represent the interests of American evangelicals before official Washington. During 1944, the Commission on Post-war Relief was formed with Philip A. Benson, former president of the American Bankers Association, as chairman. Within two years, the membership had grown to nine hundred thousand with

² n.n., "Sectarianism Receives New Lease on Life," The Christian Century, 60:596, May 19, 1943.

³ J. Elwin Wright, "Growth of NAE Is Modern Evangelical Miracle," United Evangelical Action, 5:5, April 15, 1946.

eight active commissions. After three years, the membership stood at about one million individuals, twenty-two denominations and hundreds of local churches, besides other Christian organizations and members. Eleven offices in as many cities were scattered across the nation as were scores of regional and local committees with several other denominations considering affiliation with NAE. By 1948, interest and activity had so increased that there were commissions for evangelism, missions, army and navy chaplains, industrial chaplains, Christian educational institutions, church schools, radio, home missions, and Christian liberty.

By the time of the 1949 Convention in Chicago, it could be reported that

The Seventh Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals furnished ample proof that the NAE is definitely 'in the picture' as far as Protestant cooperation in America is concerned, and leaders in government, industry and society in general are looking to it as the point of united evangelical action.⁴

At the same convention, it was revealed that membership in 1949 stood at 1,300,000 members and that through its affiliates and commissions the Association officially served three million more. Thirty-three denominations and seventy boards, conferences, and institutions belonged. The November 15, 1951, issue of UEA reported that the number of Christians

⁴ n.n., "Evangelicals at Chicago United for Action," United Evangelical Action, 8:3, May 1, 1949

served by the NAE had increased to over twelve million. The official report of the 1954 Convention held in Cleveland, Ohio, stated that forty-two denominations were officially affiliated besides one hundred boards, conferences and institutions and about one thousand churches.

By the time of the 1947 Convention in Omaha, it was necessary to ask the re-elected president, Dr. Rutherford L. Decker, pastor of Temple Baptist Church, Kansas City, Missouri, to serve as the first full-time president of NAE with two assistants. He became part-time executive director of NAE in October, 1951, and at the 1952 Convention his resignation from his pastorate and assumption of the office of full-time executive director was announced. Offices were moved from Boston to Chicago that year. In December, 1954, the offices again were moved from Chicago to Wheaton, Illinois. A Midwest Regional office is still maintained in Chicago.

This latter move was part of an effort to take the NAE yet more to the people. A larger share of the promotion and responsibility thus was placed on the regional offices in Los Angeles; Portland, Oregon; Minneapolis; and Boston. The new plan was designed to function through city fellowships, county fellowships and area fellowships in affiliation with NAE. It was determined that such an affiliated fellowship may be composed of pastors or pastors and laymen as determined by the local group. Local membership does not consti-

tute one a member of the national organization. By the time of the 1952 Convention, also held in Chicago, the Association was fully organized on a regional basis in five areas and partially organized with a part-time director in another. These regions were the New England, Midwest, Upper Midwest, Southeast, Portland, Oregon, area, and New York (part-time). It was hoped that such local fellowships would make for greater prestige on that level. Areas of local action were to be monthly meetings, an annual Sunday School convention or conference, collection of relief material, an evangelical community welfare plan, local sponsorship of NAE publications in answer to propaganda of the Knights of Columbus, and action on dancing in the public schools and released time for religious instruction.

Chicago was the site of the 1948 Convention. It was then that NAE leadership recognized the necessity of lay organizations as auxiliaries, if the NAE were to accomplish its purpose of providing a united voice for all evangelicals. One, the Women's Fellowship, was organized under the leadership of Mrs. Leslie R. Marston of Greenville, Illinois. The Fellowship took definite form at the time of the 1949 Convention in Chicago with the adoption of a constitution. It planned to encourage the formation of local chapters in every major center in the nation. The doctrinal basis of the Women's Fellowship is the same as that of NAE. Their projects include work in

the areas of war relief, Christian education, Christian home crusade, prayer fellowships, Christian literature, missions, evangelism, and social problems and civic action. Membership in 1954 was 2470.

The National Laymen's Advisory Council, organized the same year (1948) with S. A. Rohrer, an Elkhart, Indiana, manufacturer as chairman, undertook three principle objectives: (1) to make available to the NAE the experience and counsel of the laymen of America who are devoted to Christ and the Church; (2) to provide the NAE a means of contacting other Christian men across America who may be enlisted in active Christian service; and (3) to undergird financially the program of NAE.

In 1945, NAE asked Dr. Carl F. H. Henry, then of Northern Baptist Theological Seminary and now of Fuller Theological Seminary, to serve as secretary of the Evangelical Book List Committee. Its function was to select each year outstanding evangelical books and to make the list available to the public. Criteria of judgment were literary quality and faithful representation of the best evangelical thought. The first list was published that year and has subsequently been published each spring with a special issue of United Evangelical Action devoted to books. Other services of NAE will be discussed in a later chapter.

To date, the National Association of Evangelicals has had seven presidents and thirteen Annual Conventions. The presidents have been outstanding Christian leaders; they are

Dr. Harold J. Ockenga, pastor of Park Street Congregational Church, Boston--1942-'44

Bishop Leslie R. Marston, Free Methodist Church--1944-'46

Dr. Rutherford L. Decker, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Kansas City, Missouri--1946-'48

Dr. Stephen W. Paine, president of Houghton College, Houghton, New York--1948-'50

Dr. Frederick Curtis Fowler, pastor of Knoxville Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh--1950-'52

Dr. Paul S. Rees, pastor of First Covenant Church, Minneapolis--1952-'54

Dr. Henry H. Savage, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pontiac, Michigan--1954-

Besides the Conventions and sites mentioned throughout this chapter, there are the following:

1945--Chicago

1946--Minneapolis

1950--Indianapolis

1951--Chicago

1953--Cincinnati

1955--Chicago

Thus, in twelve years has arisen one of the great influences for good and the spread of the Gospel. It is now an organization of prestige, influence, and power. The problems presented by J. Elwin Wright in 1945 had been largely met and overcome. He expressed the obstacles thus:

The organization of such a movement as N. A. E. is a major task and cannot be completed in a year or even a decade. Prejudices must melt, misunderstandings must be frankly dealt with and dissolved. There must be a gradual education of the people in the benefits of cooperation without domination or interference with denominational programs. There is also present as a hindering factor the enmity of the proponents of modernism.

In view of all these conditions it is remarkable that in these few short months the membership has grown to 900,000 with thousands in addition who are in spiritual unity with the objectives of the organization.⁵

And so it is that despite a small beginning, a limited financial backing, opposition without, and, it must be confessed, defection betimes within, God has peculiarly blessed the National Association of Evangelicals. Today it stands strong and ready to serve. An evidence of this fact is the 1951 Convention. Over three thousand people were in attendance, and one of the highlights of the Convention was an address by Senator Charles W. Tobey of New Hampshire, which was carried over a nationwide ABC hookup. The Associated Press, United Press, and International News Service wired their press. The

⁵ J. Elwin Wright, "N. A. E. Soon to Celebrate 2nd Anniversary; Organization Continues to Expand," United Evangelical Action, 3:1-2, April 4, 1945.

Convention reporter exclaimed significantly, "For the first time in its history the NAE was a vital part of contemporary history."⁶

⁶ n.n., "The NAE Faces Issues in National Crisis (A Report of the Ninth Annual Convention in Chicago)," United Evangelical Action, 10:4, May 1, 1951.

CHAPTER III

THE BASIS OF UNITY

The Saviour prayed, "that they . . . may be one in us: that the world may believe. . . ."1 St. Paul seems to feel that unity is the natural result of Christian maturity, for he writes to the believers in Ephesus, "That we . . . may grow up into him in all things. . . ."2 The essential oneness of the Church is to be found in its Head, Christ Jesus. The basis of unity of Christians is to be found in a right interpretation of the Person and work of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, third Person of the Holy Trinity, and Saviour of men. This is important. Things not important according to the Apostle might include the type of church government, the administration of the Sacraments, et. al. In other words, unity on essential doctrines and not on social action is the basis of all true oneness. It is imperative that the followers of Christ hold to a correct Christology before they can have a proper perspective of what the Christian life is.

The National Association of Evangelicals, feeling that it was the lack of a doctrinal foundation which caused the Federal, National, and World Councils of Churches "to drift into the sandbars of heterodoxy" and to emphasize social and

1 John 17.21.

2 Ephesians 4.14-15.

political reform as a cure-all for the ills of the world, prescribed, as a plumbline to test one's fitness to belong, a statement of faith. The Committee which was appointed at St. Louis to do this accomplished their task in such a short time as to make their unanimity almost a sign of the good things and great accomplishments which were to come--because they united on a doctrinal basis and not in spite of it.

The Statement of Faith is found as Article III of the Constitution of NAE and reads:

(1) We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.

(2) We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

(3) We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death, through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father and in His personal return in power and glory.

(4) We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful man regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.

(5) We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.

(6) We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life

and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

(7) We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

As one can see, the Statement is sufficiently broad to include the essentials of Christian doctrine without excluding a person because of non-essentials to which he may subscribe. Thus, the basis of unity is found in the oneness which evangelicals have with one another in Christ. No sacrifice of principle involving the basic teachings of Scripture is involved. NAE was established as a witness to the faith and thus is an exclusivist organization, admitting only those who subscribe to the creed.

In the Presidential Address before delegates to the 1949 Convention, Dr. Stephen W. Paine outlined the policy of the NAE. Entitling his message "Cooperation without Compromise," Dr. Paine asserted that if the NAE should ever develop into an organization for cooperation instead of witness, it would have failed in its original purpose. While adherents were interested in activities and cooperation, the president asserted that the supreme purpose of NAE was to witness to the faith once delivered. He felt that if the activities of the Association were emphasized to the neglect of the witness, many would join because of their interest in its program, while having their fingers crossed concerning the Statement

of Faith. He cited the Federal Council of Churches as an example.

Not wishing "a theological straight jacket," the FCC organized for the purpose of cooperation in the areas of life and work in which the Church was interested. It did require an assent to the statement concerning Jesus as "divine Lord and Savior." This became so diluted of meaning that it hindered no one except Unitarians and the like from associating with FCC. When the World Council made the basis of membership to be a subscription to faith in Jesus as "God and Savior," the FCC declared that its traditional statement and the one of WCC were fully equivalent. According to Paine, this indicated that words meant absolutely nothing to FCC members, for a good many in the Council openly admitted contrary beliefs. He spoke of and warned against the danger of NAE ever becoming, then, more interested in cooperation than in witness.

In reply to the hypothetical question, "What's the use of being in NAE if there is not more for us to do, more apparent occasion for activity?" the reply from Paine was,

Our answer is that if we never did anything more than to declare our united adherence to the evangelical statement of faith, letting the world know that there are some thirty-two denominations, plus more than 400 local churches, plus numbers of organizations who feel strongly enough about this to organize specifically to witness to this faith once delivered to the saints--if we did not a thing more than that, our organization would be worthwhile.³

³ Stephen W. Paine, "Cooperation without Compromise," United Evangelical Action, 8:11, May 1, 1949.

That there are differences and distinctions between groups because of doctrinal differences is recognized. Dr. Paine set this forth lucidly in the following extended quotation:

Now what about those doctrinal distinctives which have in large measure accounted for the division of the Protestant Church into its various denominations? Here are the varying views on the sovereignty of God as related to the free will of man, varying views as to the ordinance of baptism, the significance of the sacraments, the doctrine of divine healing, of sanctification, of the gifts of the Spirit. 'Certainly,' someone will say, 'if we are to come together simply on the basis of our common evangelical core of belief we are going to have to compromise on our distinctives, being content to see them listed as unimportant.'

But we of the NAE would answer, 'By no means. We have found thus far in NAE an avenue for cooperation without any compromise in regard to our respective doctrinal distinctives.'

.
 . . . we have not for one moment consented to the proposition that our distinctive doctrines are unimportant nor a matter for indifference. We frankly do have doctrinal differences about which . . . we are fully persuaded in our own minds. But we have found that our area of agreement embraces those truths which we all hold to be essential to salvation. We have come to realize that despite areas of doctrinal disagreement, we are dealing with people who give evidence of being . . . Christians and who have a theological platform consistent therewith.

We therefore base our cooperation fully and solely upon the common faith of us all, allowing each other complete freedom in our distinctives.⁴

This is the glory of NAE!

⁴ Ibid., pp. 11-12.

The National Association of Evangelicals is not a super-church; it does not pretend to speak as the Church. It is an association of churches united for action and not a council of churches. The reader will recall that the original name of the organization was the National Association of Evangelicals for United Action. No denominational distinctive has been sacrificed as has been occasioned by membership in the World and National Councils as well as in the American and International Councils. These groups tend to dictate to their constituents what is to be believed. In the NCC and WCC, a non-liturgical church must surrender that distinctive in order to participate in a highly sacerdotal worship service. From the two aforementioned Fundamentalist Councils, adherents to Pentecostalism are excluded as being outside the stream of historic Protestantism. Other similar restrictions have forced the American Council into a defensive, narrow, oftentimes bigoted position and have compelled its membership to immolate their denominational distinctives on the high altar of Fundamentalistic separatism. The difference, then, between the ACCC and the NAE is that the former tends to judge whether or not those seeking membership have fellowship with sinners regardless of their testimony to belief in Christ as God; the latter will accept them on the basis of their faith whether or not they may belong to a group which may be considered

to be apostate. It will be recalled in this connection that the ACCC will not admit to membership anyone or any church whose denomination is aligned with either the NCC or the WCC. The NAE holds that a person or a local church may be a member of the Association notwithstanding the fact that his or its denomination may be associated with either or both of the liberal Councils. Too, a local church is given voting privileges and is thus recognized as a valid ecclesiastical unit in the NAE.

That the membership of NAE can become one and can unite for evangelical action is no mean accomplishment, for any attempt of men with strong convictions to band together is bound to be fraught with difficulties of the greatest kind. God has singularly blessed the efforts of NAE. Each undertaking has been underwritten by His promise of success. Their motto might well be that oft quoted one of the Pietists: "In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, and in all things charity."

CHAPTER IV

THE WORK OF THE COMMISSIONS

The National Association of Evangelicals is styled by its leadership as a service organization. Indeed, the purpose of the Association in the first place was that it might provide a united voice on issues involving the interests of evangelicals and that in instances of desired united action on the part of these same people, the Association would be available for use. With these principles in mind, the Policy Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Paine outlined a proposed program of evangelical endeavor. This was at the Planning Conference in St. Louis in 1942. This proposed program is found in chapter 1 of this paper.

COMMISSION ON RADIO

The problem of radio was of primary interest to the newly created NAE. It was the policy of the National Broadcasting Company to refuse to sell time for religious broadcasts. The demand for such broadcasts was met by allotting time impartially to Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. This no doubt worked well with the Catholics and Jews, but was highly unfair to Protestant evangelicals, for this time was under the direction of the Federal Council which gave most of it to liberals. Evangelicals were left without a radio voice comparable to that of the liberals.

It was the custom of the Columbia Broadcasting System to confer with denominational leaders in its selection of speakers for its "Church of the Air." Advice of evangelicals was seldom sought making this method of allotting time about as unjust as the way of NBC.

Major denominations were allowed to provide speakers for "Chapel of the Air," a Mutual Network production. This System, however, did sell time at the regular commercial rates, and it was estimated by NAE leadership that over one and a half million dollars was spent annually by evangelical broadcasters to the Mutual System.

This was the situation at the time of the St. Louis meeting in 1942, and thus became the most urgent of NAE activities. Dr. Harold Lundquist of Moody Bible Institute and Mr. Wright were appointed to represent NAE at the 1942 conference of The Institute for Education by Radio, which holds an annual meeting and which is sponsored by Ohio State University in Columbus.

Several recommendations were made at the conference. Religious programs were to be directed to Protestants, Catholics, Jews, and non-believers and not to members of any one faith. This would dilute a broadcast of any doctrinal elements. Religious programs were to contain no attack on the beliefs of others. Religious broadcasting should be done on a sustained time basis, i.e., non-payment for time. This provision would

eliminate such broadcasts as The Lutheran Hour and The Old Fashioned Revival Hour. Time allocations were to be supervised by network officials and advisory committees from various denominations. No appeal for financial support of the programs should be permitted.

Mr. Wright was allowed the privilege of addressing the convention on behalf of the NAE. He protested the recommendation that religious broadcasts be addressed to a cross section of the public, i.e., devoid of doctrinal implications. It was agreed that it was bad taste to attack any group or individual, but the third point was one with which he violently disagreed. Explaining the two segments of Protestantism, liberal and conservative, Wright made clear the necessity of maintaining the privilege of buying radio time under the system of time allotment which obtained with the major networks. A protest was entered also against the recommendation that no financial appeals be made. While it was allowed that many abused the privilege, it was pointed out by the speaker that a dignified appeal for funds was not mauvais gout. To support this contention, he made reference to The Lutheran Hour and The Old Fashioned Revival Hour, both of which are supported by contributions. These programs, Wright indicated, are in the hands of responsible organizations and conducted on a business like basis.

Because of this statement of NAE policy, the recommendations were greatly modified. It was conceded that evangelicals should have the right to preach doctrinal sermons, and the recommendation that all religious broadcasting be placed on a sustaining basis was changed. The recommendation that no financial appeals be permitted over the air was maintained, but since the counsel of the conference was not binding upon the radio stations, it was felt that this might not be strictly enforced.

Already the fact that there was at last cohesion among evangelicals had paid off and that within a month after the St. Louis gathering!

Dr. William Ward Ayer, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in New York City, recommended to the Association at the Constitutional Convention in 1943 that a Committee on Radio be established with a full-time director. A code of ethics for evangelical broadcasters was adopted:

1. Gospel broadcasting by constituent members of the NAE shall be maintained on a dignified plane.
2. The NAE shall recognize for membership and fellowship only such gospel broadcasters as shall maintain their programs on a high ethical and financial basis.
3. Gospel programs shall, insofar as possible, be comparable in quality to commercial broadcasts.

4. Care must be exercised in gospel broadcasting to avoid highly controversial and minute sectarian discussion. The emphasis should always be upon the great fundamental truths of the Bible, and extreme care should be exercised against giving unnecessary offense to religious groups with which we differ.

5. Great care must be exercised in solicitation of funds. We strongly recommend that dignity, honesty, and Christian sincerity be exercised in appeals for expenses for radio broadcasting, and that the time occupied for these appeals shall be kept to a minimum and shall not be grossly out of proportion to the length of the broadcast.

National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) was organized in Columbus, Ohio, in 1944 by a group of approximately one hundred fifty Gospel broadcasters. In September, 1944, they held a constitutional convention in Chicago at Moody Church. There they decided to incorporate, and a Board of Directors was chosen. At their second Convention, in 1945, they voted to take the necessary steps to make NRB a subsidiary and component part of NAE. The Executive Committee of NRB was to be the Commission on Radio of NAE with the president of NRB to be the chairman of the Commission. Its objectives were to protect the radio rights of all religious broadcasters accredited by NRB and to keep radio stations open to them. The

statement of faith of the two groups is the same; at the same time, the Code of Ethics of NRB is considered by the radio industry to be of a high character. National Radio Broadcasters holds a yearly convention, an annual radio seminar and issues a quarterly bulletin.

The Commission on Radio was able to report at the 1946 NAE Convention that

a survey of network religious broadcasting in 1945 shows greater consideration on the part of some networks for evangelical programs. Whereas the Mutual System in 1944 gave evangelicals no free time, in 1944 it gave them 6½ hours. Of the 208 hours of religious time sold by the Mutual network, all but 26 hours was purchased by seven associations broadcasting an evangelical message.¹

Other action at the same Convention authorized the establishment of a Washington, D. C., office with an executive secretary, and the creation of three national annual awards to encourage a higher quality religious program. A resolution was adopted to inform the Federal Communications Commission, and radio officials, of the difference between liberal and orthodox Protestantism, i.e., that Protestantism is not a unified body.

Dr. Clinton H. Churchill who headed the corporation owning a fifty thousand watt radio station in Buffalo retired, at the 1947 Convention, as president of NRB after having served two years. In his annual report, he stated that NRB had won respect and recognition by the Federal Communications Commis-

¹ N.A., "Progress at Minneapolis," United Evangelical Action, 5:5, May 15, 1946.

sion and that the president of the National Association of Broadcasters had agreed to confer with NRB over the problem of the latter's difficulty in securing radio time. Dr. Theodore H. Elsner was elected president. By 1948, the three major networks were granting more consideration to NRB. A session of the Convention was broadcast over the NBC network. To investigate the possibilities in the new medium of communication, a television committee was appointed.

A new service of NRB was launched in 1949 with the institution of its Evangelical Radio Forum. Experts in radio broadcasting were there including executives from CBS, Mutual, and ABC networks. The trade magazines Broadcasting and Billboard had reporters present. Another aid to religious broadcasters was revealed with plans for a Mid-Year Seminar on Religious Radio to be held in August. This was not held, however, until June, 1950. By Convention time 1951, the NRB was broadcasting over more than fifteen hundred radio stations; some members had television programs.

New and greater courtesies were extended to NRB the following year with more privileges of gospel broadcasts. An appeal was sent to the National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters requesting a change in the clause in their new code which recommended that a charge not be made to churches and religious bodies for television time. It was

felt by NRB leaders that, while it sounded good, it really would do them harm on the same basis as the issue several years previous over allotted time on radio.

COMMISSION ON EDUCATION

The Commission on Education is set up with four units: Division of Colleges, Division of Seminary Education, National Association of Bible Institutes and Bible Colleges, and Division of Secondary Schools. Its purpose is to encourage high standards of scholarship in Christian educational institutions.

At the 1946 Convention, the Commission was asked to formulate a Christian philosophy of education which was to emphasize deficiencies of the Harvard University report and other inadequate philosophies of education. The editor and chairman was Dr. Frank C. Gaebelin, Headmaster of Stoney Brook School. Working with him were Robert L. Cooke, Wheaton College; the Reverend Mark Fakkema, executive secretary of the National Association of Christian Schools; Ruth Eckert Paulson, University of Minnesota; Carl F. H. Henry, Fuller Theological Seminary; Harold B. Kuhn, Asbury Theological Seminary; Leslie R. Marston, Bishop of the Free Methodist Church; Stephen W. Paine, president of Houghton College; S. A. Witmer, president of Fort Wayne Bible College.

Their scholarly report was published in 1951 by the Oxford University Press under the title Christian Education

in A Democracy.

It provides evangelicals with an authoritative basis for action and a challenge to greater effort in the crucial field of Christian education . . . it compels the respect and attention of other sections of Protestantism. . . .²

The book contains twelve chapters:

1. "Preface to Christian Education"--its relevance and need in an age of crisis
2. "Upon What Foundations"--the Biblical and evangelical basis of Christian education
3. "The Idea of A Christian School"--the essential criteria for a Christian educational institution
4. "Christian Education Looks at The Public School"--a candid survey of religion and public education
5. "Christian Education And The Independent School"--Christian day and boarding schools, other 'private' religious schools, their philosophy and achievements
6. "The Strategic Place of The Christian College"--Christian education at the college level, its aims, opportunities, and needs
7. "A New Form of American Education"--an evaluation of the Bible Institute and the Bible college
8. "With What Teachers"--the Christian teacher, his recruitment, training, and opportunity

² n.m., "NAE Service Agencies," United Evangelical Action, 10:19, March 15, 1951.

9. "The Church as Educator"--the Sunday school, the daily vacation Bible school, and similar church-centered activities

10. "Christian Education and The Home"--the inescapable educational responsibility of the home

11. "This Then Is Christian Youth"--the end product of Christian education, a presentation of the goal in terms of individual life

12. "The Unfinished Business of Christian Education"--areas to be developed, needs to be met, purposes to be realized

Also begun in 1946 was a study of the possibility of Christian education on the primary and elementary levels. The division of Bible Institutes and Bible Colleges laid plans for the organization of the North American Association of Bible Institutes and Bible Colleges for the study of common problems. At the same time the Christian Colleges division launched a program to provide a registration service for evangelical teachers on the secondary, Bible Institute, college, and seminary levels. The purpose was to provide a clearing house for evangelical schools seeking faculty and staff additions. The Seminary division discussed an ambitious plan to encourage evangelical scholars to produce needed books written from a conservative standpoint. A Christian Textbook Committee was appointed.

It was voted at the 1947 Convention to promote the establishment of Christian day schools across the nation. A National

Association of Christian Schools was organized with plans for a central office. Within a year, more requests for aid and advice for the establishment of elementary Christian Day Schools were received at the office than could adequately be handled.

It was reported at the 1952 Convention that the ratio of Catholic parochial school students to other non-public school students had decreased from 8.8 to 1 in 1937-38 to 5.3 to 1 in 1947-48. Since the latter year many Christian elementary and secondary schools have been established reducing the ratio even more. In November, 1950, the National Association of Christian Schools began publishing The Christian Teacher, a monthly publication. It is not designed necessarily for the teacher but to be a teacher itself. It aids in education of children at home as well as in the school. As of 1952, eighty-three Christian school organizations had affiliated with NACS. Ninety-four had joined by the following year. By 1955, 125 schools were associated with the Division. Only elementary and secondary schools may belong.

In 1953, the Seminary division issued the following report:

. . . a closer relationship between our evangelical Seminaries in the solution of our common problems is most desirable. We do have much in common in the evangelical position we hold and the purpose, policies and practices which govern our administrative and academic life. Evangelical Graduate Schools in Theology need to stand together,

cooperate one with another in solving our mutual problems, and present a solid front in the conflict we face today in liberalism's persistent opposition to evangelical education and in the Satanic attacks of secularism and materialism on the Biblical absolutism inherent in our evangelical educational philosophy.³

The Commission on Evangelical Faith was incorporated into this Commission in 1955.

COMMISSION ON EVANGELICAL YOUTH

The National Association of Evangelical Youth was organized at the time of the third annual NAE Convention in 1945. The Reverend Torrey M. Johnson was named the first president. According to Mr. Johnson, its purpose would be to

promote fellowship among evangelical youth organizations, encourage cooperative activities and programs, stimulate evangelism among young people and disseminate information on youth work.⁴

The Association in turn has five commissions on Youth Materials, Social and Recreational Life, Evangelism, Youth Counseling and Vocational Guidance, and Missions. They voted at the 1946 Convention to affiliate with NAE. A Committee on Objectives came up with these results:

1. Compilation of a registry of evangelical youth organizations leading toward a clearing house on progressive accomp-

³ James D. Murch, "Forward March! God Wills It," United Evangelical Action, 13:23, June 1, 1954.

⁴ n.n., "Form National Association of Evangelical Youth," United Evangelical Action, 6[3]:12, May 19, 1945.

lishments.

2. Development of a youth leadership Section in United Evangelical Action covering (a) youth methods, and (b) book reviews.

3. Preparation of an approved list of summer camps and conferences for youth.

4. Exploration and guidance in the field of radio programs for the spiritual development of Christian youth.

5. Establishment of research commissions on: leadership training, visual education, missionary appeal, vocational guidance, counseling youth.

6. Exploration of the need and possibilities of regional conferences for young people and also for youth leadership training.

7. Development of adequate program materials.

8. Guidance to editors and publishers regarding youth publications.

9. Suggesting proved organizational patterns for youth work in the local church.

10. Planning for the annual conference of Evangelical Youth in conjunction with the NAE Convention.

By 1947, Evangelical Youth had a service constituency of hundreds of thousands of youth and was planning to publish a quarterly bulletin for interchange of information and methods. Plans were laid in 1948 for a national Evangelical

Youth Congress. After it had been functioning five years, it was reported in 1950 that "the field of EY is distinctly that of a cooperative service association for denominational youth organizations."⁵

Evangelical Youth now represents upwards of half a million young people.

COMMISSION ON MISSIONS

The Washington office of NAE opened September 13, 1943, under the headship of Clyde W. Taylor. The director originally had three areas of work, one of which was missions. It fell to him to represent the interests of evangelical mission boards before government agencies and to influence legislation favorable to the cause of foreign missions.

First discussed in 1944, the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association was organized at the 1945 NAE Convention as an integral part of NAE. Thirty-nine boards participated in the Constitutional Convention. It is a voluntary association of denominational and non-denominational evangelical foreign mission boards. The Association is incorporated under the laws of the State of Delaware; they accept as their statement of faith that given in the Constitution and By-Laws of NAE.

⁵ n.n., "Spirit of Revival Marks NAE at Indianapolis," United Evangelical Action, 9:15, May 1, 1950.

Membership in the EFMA is based upon acceptance of the creedal statement, and the society must be organized for the purpose of evangelization and have a responsible board of directors; it shall have not less than ten active foreign missionaries, and shall publish annually a well audited financial report. It must be of good reputation and subscribe to and abide by the accepted standards of comity.

The standards of comity are set forth to aid in maintaining harmony and frictionlessness among the different agencies. The first standard concerns the message which must be based squarely and firmly upon God's Word; the second deals with territory. Enough people have not heard the gospel so that there need be no overlapping of effort. It is important that as many as possible be reached as soon as possible. All interested agencies are consulted when a problem arises concerning territory. A solution is sought which is advantageous to all. A third standard concerns personnel. One may transfer from one agency to another, but frowned upon is the practice of enticing personnel of one board to join another. Yet another standard deals with presentation of the work. Overstatements often result in erroneous impressions.

Member agencies of EFMA present a solid front before governments so that their interests are protected. It sponsors conferences, provides fellowship and promotes cooperative effort. The Association aids in the securing of

passports and visas, steamship bookings, air reservations, etc., and in purchasing supplies. In New York City, EFMA maintains a purchasing arm where equipment may be secured at reduced prices. The Universal Travel Service, Inc., of Chicago handles transportation needs of evangelical missionaries. This office is the official travel agency for NAE, EFMA, Youth For Christ, and other evangelical organizations and institutions. Thus, the Washington office cares for diplomatic matters (visas, passports, etc.), the New York office aids in the outfitting of the missionary, and the Chicago office helps him to arrive on the field.

During the year 1945, the Washington office served fifty-four mission boards, twenty-three being denominational and thirty-one interdenominational. It expedited 335 passports which was an increase of more than four hundred per cent. over preceding years. The next year saw over four hundred passports and one hundred visas secured by the Washington office which in that year served seventy mission boards. At the 1948 Convention, it was reported that about twenty per cent. of all the Protestant missionaries were serving under Boards which used the facilities of the Washington office. The purchasing service that year also made all items except automobiles available to clergy in this country. Any evangelical may avail himself of its services whether or not he belongs to NAE or EFMA. By the time of the 1949 Convention, the purchas-

ing office was saving its constituents about six thousand dollars a month. Services of the Washington office that year were extended to ninety mission agencies and thirty-one foreign mission societies. This number had grown to over a hundred boards by 1955. The purchasing office is now entirely self-sustained.

The Washington office is active in offsetting efforts of the Roman Catholic hierarchy to close doors to Protestants. Incessant war is waged against persecution of missionaries especially in Latin America. During a trip in 1952 to this area, evangelical fellowships were encouraged in every land where not already existing. Mr. Taylor went to England in June, 1948, and was instrumental in securing recognition of EFMA by the British Government. Evangelical committees and councils were being set up in foreign lands for the protection of the interests of evangelical missions.

It was reported at the 1950 NAE Convention that EFMA had a completely coordinated service far superior to anything in the field. Its budget for 1949 was thirty-nine thousand dollars. In the same year, the purchasing office became self-supporting with a volume of business approximating four hundred thousand dollars which saved constituents another one hundred thousand dollars in discounts. As of 1950, the EFMA had an office in Japan with sixteen mission boards cooperating. Projects there are a Christian Day School for

missionaries' children, a hospital service, and an interdenominational radio service. It was revealed at the Convention that Mr. Taylor had gained entrance to State Department conferences on all foreign mission matters. Some of these conferences had previously been open only to representatives of international or interdenominational organizations.

As of March 31, 1954, the EFMA was serving forty-one mission agencies with a total of approximately four thousand fifty missionaries in service. Publication of The Missionary News Service was begun October 1, 1954.

COMMISSION ON SUNDAY SCHOOLS

When the National Association of Evangelicals was organized in 1943, the agitation for something to be done about the serious decline in Sunday School attendance due in part to the influence of the liberal International Council of Religious Education was already several years old. In the fall of 1943, the Board of Administration of NAE took under consideration the possibility of developing a new evangelical system of uniform Sunday School lessons. At their December meeting the same year, Dr. Clarence H. Benson was appointed chairman of a new lesson committee. Meetings of the committee were then called in Columbus in 1944 and in 1945 with representatives of denominations, publishers, editors, and religious leaders in attendance.

As an outgrowth of this, the temporary organization was formed in May, 1945, of the National Sunday School Association (NSSA). A committee of the new group met in August of the same year to prepare the new Uniform Lesson outlines. In October met Sunday School workers in the first (Constitutional) Convention of NSSA in Chicago. An annual convention in various cities has been held each year subsequent to 1945. At the Detroit Convention in 1951, between four thousand and five thousand were in attendance representing forty-three denominations.

The growth of the NSSA has been phenomenal. When the new lesson series was first used (in January, 1948), one publisher alone gave assurance of a circulation of over one million.

Within the framework of NSSA are Commissions on Children's Work, Youth Work, Adult Work, Missionary Education, Evangelism, Leadership-training, Audio-visual Aids, Christian Education, Christian Publications, Vacation Bible Schools, Week-day Schools, and Home. The Association by 1951 was producing outlines for Uniform Bible Lessons for twelve publications and 1,500,000 pupils.

Conventions are promoted throughout the land on local, district, regional, and state bases; many of these are associated with NSSA. By 1952, there were thirty. As a result, some Sunday Schools reported an increase in size from thirty

to a hundred per cent. in a year.

Organizational changes were effected in 1951. Because of the limitations of the original constitution, NSSA was hindered in its development. Changes related to the basic place of sovereignty and the basis of membership. Under the revision sovereignty is placed in a General Council composed of delegates of evangelical denominations, representatives of the various Sunday School Associations, and independent publishers. The nation was divided into eight regions to care better for the wide interests of the Association.

The first National Sunday School Week was observed in 1951; this was a joint project of NSSA and the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau of New York, a Missouri Synod Lutheran organization. NSSA also sponsors National Family Week each May. By this same year over fifteen publishers and publications used the Uniform Bible Lesson Series outlines. The UBLS Committee is composed of two groups: the Central Committee, a group of carefully selected editors who prepare the outlines; and the General Committee, representatives of the several publishing firms which use the lessons.

Link, the official monthly publication of NSSA, was first published in January, 1953. One half is devoted to local Sunday School methods and one half to Sunday School news in general and to the promotion of NSSA.

Dr. Clarence Benson reported at the NAE Convention in 1954 that more than two million pupils had been added to the Sunday Schools of the nation in the preceding year. He expressed the belief that NSSA was one of the contributing causes. Leaders feel that the success of the Association is due to the fact that the organization is kept in the background while the sincere desire to serve the churches is in the foreground.

For the tenth NSSA Convention in October, 1955, plans are now to hold one in Spokane, Washington, the first week and one in Providence, Rhode Island, the last week of the month.

COMMISSION ON GOVERNMENT CHAPLAINS

As in radio, so in government chaplaincies, the founders of NAE expressed the feeling that because the Federal Government looked upon the Federal Council of Churches as the voice of Protestantism, no appointments to the post of chaplain were made of evangelical ministers. It was, then, the task of this Commission to present before the authorities the right of evangelicals to a portion of the vacancies in Protestant chaplaincies. The Commission is fully recognized and officially registered with the office of the Chief of Chaplains and was awarded a Certificate of Merit for services rendered during World War II.

It has been the custom for Roman Catholic priests to minister exclusively in Puerto Rican hospitals; however, the Commission was able to lend aid to national evangelical pastors in getting some Protestants into some of these posts. In this country, denominations officially affiliated with NAE are assigned quotas as vacancies occur. It is the duty of the Commission to ask associated denominations to encourage their young men to enter the chaplaincy.

The Commission report at the 1954 NAE Convention stated that seventy chaplains, up until that time, had been sponsored by the Commission. An annual visit by a member of the Commission is made to each of these men.

In 1955 a plan was revealed to sponsor an Evangelical Big Brothers Club composed of Christian servicemen to weld them together into a working unit for Christian leadership and to encourage each other.

COMMISSION ON WORLD RELIEF

The Commission for Post-War (as it was originally named) Relief was formed in 1944 with Philip A. Benson, former president of the American Bankers' Association as chairman. It was recognized that government and other agencies were doing splendidly in providing needed clothing and food to the needy about the world. Nevertheless, NAE leadership recognized also that conservative Protestants on a nation-wide

scale had not entered the field of relief work. A spiritual ministry was needed and not being provided by other agencies.

Within a few months, the Commission had sent to Europe more than six hundred thousand pounds of clothing worth approximately \$634,000 and over one hundred thousand dollars had been raised to finance the program. In Europe, the clothing was worth about seven million dollars. Each gift was accompanied by a gospel tract. The project was carried out with less than one-fourth the administrative cost of other licensed agencies. An office on the Pacific coast was planned in 1946. In 1946-47, the program was augmented by shipping food parcels to fifteen countries. Over a million pounds of clothing was shipped in the same period. This program has continued at much the same level of giving.

COMMISSION ON EVANGELISM

The following statement was published in an early issue of United Evangelical Action:

Your Committee for Evangelism recommends adherence to an evangelistic policy for N. A. E. that shall be broadly conceived and advisedly administered. This policy must take cognizance of the varieties of approach and technic with which our constituent groups carry on the evangelistic task of the church of our Lord.

We therefore do not regard it as our function to conduct evangelistic campaigns as a national association, nor to attempt to set patterns of evangelism, but rather to encourage the spirit and practice of soul winning everywhere and all the time. This, we believe, can be done

constructively through the sponsoring of evangelistic conferences or institutes, through advising with church leaders and regional committees who may seek our assistance, and by alert reporting of soul-winning events in the columns of "United Evangelical Action."

We recognize that notwithstanding the foregoing statement local units of N. A. E. may find it eminently feasible and fruitful to conduct evangelistic services. This will depend on the measure of harmony and cooperation that can be achieved in a particular situation.⁶

In 1947, the Commission on Evangelism planned for a series of ten or more Conferences on Evangelism to be held in key places across the nation. These were not to be in the nature of revivals (in keeping with the policy outlined above), but rather they were designed as seminars in which the several phases of evangelism were set forth. Mass meetings in the evenings were held to inspire workers to return to their local churches to promote active evangelistic emphases. A Christian Witness Crusade was conducted in thirteen cities in 1951 with emphasis upon the work of NAE and on various phases of evangelism.

The name of the Commission was changed in 1955 to the Commission on Evangelism and Church Extension, with new duties being added.

COMMISSION ON EVANGELICAL ACTION

and

COMMISSION ON EVANGELICAL SOCIAL ACTION

⁶ n.n., "N. A. E. Adopts Policy on Evangelism," United Evangelical Action, 6 [3]:8, May 19, 1945.

These will be considered together because of their close affinity, though the former has much to do with religious liberty.

Until 1950, the Commission on Evangelical Action was known as the Committee on Christian Liberty. In 1951 because of the interest in the panel discussion in the area of social ethics, the Commission on Evangelical Social Action was created. The Committee had done a good work in bringing influence upon Congress in relation to a bill authorizing Federal aid to schools which would have allowed Federal funds to be used for Roman Catholic purposes. It cooperated with the American Legion in its fight against Communism and supported the Langer Bill on liquor advertising. It has protested the persecution of Protestants in Catholic countries and was in large part responsible for the resignation of Myron Taylor as the President's personal representative to the Vatican. The Commission also placed three thousand displaced persons at the request of Congress.

It was stated in the Report of the Committee to the 1950 NAE Convention:

It is the future purpose of the committee to take clear and definite positions in connection with the great movements abroad which would undermine the Christian foundation of the nation; to appeal for the return of integrity to places of high authority; to plead for a return to virtues, honor, honesty as basic principles in government, in society, and in individual lives. In the light of these desires the Committee on Christian Liberty has

asked that it henceforth be known as the Commission on Evangelical Action.⁷

At the 1951 Convention, the sessions of the Commission on Evangelical Action were turned over to the Committee on Forum for Christian Social Action with Dr. Carl F. H. Henry in charge. Issues discussed were Temperance, the Politico-Economic Problems, Labor Relations, and Race Relations. A State Department observer reported that these discussions by evangelical leaders was, he thought, one of the most significant movements today.

When President Truman in 1951 announced his decision to send an ambassador to the Vatican, the Commission organized a church-step signing of petitions on Reformation Sunday. This was coordinated by broadcasts sponsored by the Commission on Radio.

Another project of 1951 was a venture entitled Christian Crusaders. It was an especial call to laymen to organize for Christian social action. Yet another undertaking was a Call to Christian Citizenship to be observed between the two holidays in February honoring former United States Presidents. This program urged Christians to write to government officials in the interest of the Christian heritage of America and giving to them assurance of prayer for them. This program

⁷ N.E., "Spirit of Revival Marks NAE at Indianapolis," United Evangelical Action, 9:18, May 1, 1950.

came to little.

The Commission sponsored at the 1952 Convention a panel discussion on the relation of Church and State. In 1953, the panel discussed "The Crisis in the Home," emphasizing the disintegration of the American home, the rising divorce rate, the increased juvenile delinquency rate, and the almost complete disappearance of family worship.

Attitudes of evangelicals were well summarized by Dr. Gilbert James, one of the leaders of the Commission, when he said,

'To be fair, I must say that all evangelicals do not necessarily agree that we have a responsibility on social matters. Some will contend that we are not of this world and that the return of Christ will solve our problems. A depraved world cannot be reformed by social planning. Our total responsibility is to preach Christ and Him crucified and avoid any entanglement with the affairs of this world. Others maintain that the consummation of the Kingdom of God can only come with the return of our Lord, yet we must do all we can to bring righteousness in the earth. No matter how pessimistic may be our view of the present age, the weight of our influence must always be on the side of righteousness, justice and equality. Still others urge that it is good to relieve the suffering, to heal the sick, to improve the standard of living of the unfortunate, but the time is short and we must not dissipate our strength on secondary matters. Our total energies must be expended in bringing as many souls to Christ as we are able. Some maintain that social action is of strategic value. As Christians we should house and feed the orphan that he may be adopted into the household of faith; visit the imprisoned that he may be freed from the bondage of sin; clothe the naked that he may receive the robes of righteousness. Bluntly, they believe that social action makes good evangelical bait. And then there are a very significant number of evangelicals who are convinced that the . . . social implications of the Gospel is [are] not an alternative to the message of individual salvation, but rather the divine fruitage of regenerated men

and women.¹⁰

COMMISSION ON HOME MISSIONS

The Board of Administration asked Dr. R. L. Decker at the 1946 Convention to call a committee to consider the organization of a cooperative agency of evangelical home missionary groups. The following statement was approved by the informal conference:

In view of the fact that nearly one half the population of the United States is outside the membership of any church and that it is reported that there are 30,000 communities in the United States without a resident pastor and 10,000 communities without any church and moved by our obligation as evangelicals to carry the Gospel to everyone, including those who by racial prejudices or language barriers or social and economic conditions are deprived of Gospel privileges, it is our conviction that an Association of Evangelical Home Missions should be formed in order to strengthen and co-ordinate our present activities and to provide for co-operative Home Mission projects in areas in which individual agencies are not qualified to operate.

It was decided that the planning conference should be held at Winona Lake, Indiana, in June. The group should work with migrants, Indians, race groups, on merchant marine vessels, among railroad employees and employees of similar industries, wards of juvenile courts, inmates of penal institutions, patients in state hospitals, etc. The Commission on Home Missions would be the connecting link between the Association

¹⁰ n.n., "An Inter-Church Gathering Majoring in Religion," United Evangelical Action, 12:5f, May 15, 1953.

of Evangelical Home Missions and the National Association of Evangelicals. This Commission was created at the 1947 Convention. It has not been greatly active; therefore, in 1955, the work of the Commission was incorporated into the revamped Commission on Evangelism and Church Extension.

COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

From January, 1946, until 1950 when the Commission on International Relations was created, representatives of NAE visited more than twenty foreign countries in an effort to bring world evangelicals into closer unity. Matters discussed covered three areas: (1) the attaining of spiritual oneness for the common task of evangelism; (2) the coordinating of effort that the best use of time, materials, and personnel may be realized; (3) the creating and maintaining of the highest degree of Christian freedom. Much work was to be done in protecting Protestant minorities in Italy, Greece, Sweden, and Spain. All of these things, it was felt, could be accomplished better by international and interdenominational cooperation.

To bring about some sort of world-wide evangelical organization which would take a firm stand on basic tenets of the faith, more than fifty group conferences and two informal international conferences were held. One was in Clarens, Switzerland, in August, 1948, and another at Hildenborough,

England, in March, 1950. A third was held in the United States (Boston) in the fall of 1950. A Constitutional Convention was held in Woudschoten, Holland, in August, 1951, with delegates from twenty-one countries in attendance. There the World Evangelical Fellowship was inaugurated. The office of the Commission in Boston functioned as the American office of WEF.

Leaders including General Sir Arthur Smith, Dr. Oswald Smith, Dr. J. Elwin Wright, Dr. Paul S. Rees toured the world in an effort to encourage evangelicals, bring about greater cohesion among them, and acquaint them with the program of the Fellowship. The field of helpfulness must be confined to counseling, providing personnel for conferences--when requested, and providing financial assistance in certain approved projects. These helps have been extended to leaders in India, Singapore, Hawaii, and other places where the establishment of evangelical colleges and seminaries has been under consideration or else just begun.

This Commission is one of the most active of all the Commissions as is indicated by the list of accomplishments reported at the 1954 Convention

1. We have sent more than 12,500 volumes to the libraries of 57 schools in 29 countries, which were pitifully deficient of adequate study and reference matters.
2. We have assisted, by securing scholarships, by paying transportation, and in other ways, six students from

abroad who desired to prepare for Christian service but [who] could not have come to America without our help.

3. We have obtained support for two national teachers in India who occupy key positions in evangelical schools.

4. Several of our most effective evangelical leaders have made extensive tours abroad. . . .

5. We encouraged the establishment of Honolulu Christian College by the evangelical leaders of Hawaii and have given it considerable support.

6. We encouraged the opening of the Evangelical Seminary in Singapore and have helped it financially.

7. We have encouraged the reorganization of the Seminary in Yeotmal, India, which is now operating as a union, although we have not as yet been able to give it much financial assistance.

8. We assisted financially in the purchase of the 'Gospel Waggon' operated by the Evangelical Fellowship of Ceylon and in the printing of many thousands of tracts to be used in distribution in connection with volunteer groups using the 'Waggon.'¹¹

COMMISSION ON WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

The origin in 1948 of the Commission on Women's Fellowship is told in chapter two of this paper. In the subsequent years, the Fellowship has been active in relief work, sending thousands of dollars worth of clothing to Europe; in collecting money in "Penny-a-Meal" bags for orphan children who are cared for in a Christian Home in Germany; a monthly bulletin is issued informing the members of such vital issues as pend-

¹¹ James Mureh, "Forward March! God Wills It!" United Evangelical Action, 13:25, June 1, 1954.

ing legislation, Christian education, news of women's work, etc. The country has been divided into regions thus taking the work of the Fellowship to the grass-roots level. Issues of United Evangelical Action are placed by the women in railroad stations, libraries; knitting, making of layette sets for poor people, forming welfare societies and caring for unfortunate children and forming prayer groups are all tasks in which the Fellowship engages. By 1954, the membership had risen from the original fifty to 2470 women. It is the central purpose of the group to promote the interests of NAE and the evangelical cause, rather than to develop a women's organization simply as an end in itself.

THE LAYMEN'S ADVISORY COUNCIL

The beginnings of the Laymen's Advisory Council also are described in chapter two. The Council does not have objectives to accomplish as does a Commission--which this is not--rather it is to assist in the promotion of NAE. Members subscribe a minimum of one hundred dollars to the NAE, but they are not asked to assume special additional activities. They are encouraged to promote NAE work in the following ways:

1. Arranging for Laymen's Advisory Council banquets and inviting national leaders to speak on NAE and its objectives.
2. Arranging ministerial meetings or banquets, inviting all evangelical ministers of the community to hear one

of the national leaders speak on the current services NAE has to offer the evangelical world.

3. Encouraging individual membership in the National Association of Evangelicals and the Laymen's Advisory Council.

4. Encouraging friends to subscribe to the NAE publication, United Evangelical Action.

5. Making available to the Christian business men of their acquaintance the opportunity of promoting and supporting the various Commissions of the NAE.¹²

In 1952, it was voted by LAC to produce a promotional sound film depicting the world-wide ministry of NAE.

The combination of Christian Crusaders and LAC was effected in 1955 under the latter name.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Within six months after the NAE Constitutional Convention in 1943, the new organization opened a Washington office. It was the duty of the Director, Clyde W. Taylor who has held the office since that time, to concern himself with missions, chaplains, and Christian education. It was not long before evangelicals realized how tremendously important the NAE voice was in the capital city.

Mr. Taylor, the Secretary of Affairs as he is known, has done a splendid job. He registers before Congress and

¹² n.n., "Evangelicals at Chicago United for Action," United Evangelical Action, 8:31, May 1, 1949.

other Federal agencies the disfavor of NAE regarding such practices as the discrimination against Protestant Displaced Persons, Roman Catholic persecution of Protestant missionaries in Catholic dominated lands, Catholic handling of foreign aid monies, etc. In 1948, the Office aided evangelical chaplains, assisted some having diplomatic difficulties, helped in the international exchange of college students, immigration problems, observed pending legislation in the interests of evangelicals both in the United States and abroad. As stated elsewhere, the Vatican envoy, Myron Taylor, resigned as a result, NAE leaders feel, of the timely and strategic protest made to the government through the Washington Office. Government appointments are scrutinized, and selective service appeals are received and reviewed. Sometimes a young man who has given himself to full-time Christian service receives his summons from his draft board out of some failure on his part and some times out of prejudice on the part of members of the board. As an example--the report to the 1954 Convention:

In one state the Local Draft Board refused to defer several students in a new Bible Institute because, as they told the Institute's president, 'We inquired of the Bishop (Roman Catholic) whether he approved of your school and he did not.' The State Appeal Board apparently did nothing, but when we gave the facts to the National Board action came immediately.¹³

¹³ James DeForest Murch, "Forward March! God Wills It!," United Evangelical Action, 13:19, June 1, 1954.

In 1953, the Office prepared a file on all members of Congress relating to their religious affiliation, voting record, their stand on moral issues, and other data of importance to evangelicals.

The Washington Office feels, were funds and personnel available, that it should issue monthly confidential reports to NAE constituency on affairs of interest to them from the evangelical viewpoint (this is done now but on a limited scale), give better coverage of activities of Congress, better their relations with government officials, increase the spiritual emphasis seeking to lead men of import to Christ.

UNITED EVANGELICAL ACTION

United Evangelical Action, edited in Cincinnati by Dr. James DeForest Murch, and printed and mailed by the company in Newton, Kansas, which has done it for several years, is the official organ of NAE. Originally published in Boston, the offices were moved to Cincinnati in 1945 shortly after Dr. Murch succeeded Dr. J. Elwin Wright who had been acting as managing editor since Dr. John A. Huffman, who was the first editor, relinquished the position. The format of the journal has changed a number of times but now comes out regularly the first and the fifteenth of each month in a format that does credit to the organization for which it professes to speak.

Each year special issues are published on books, the Convention, Convention reports, education, Sunday Schools, and missions. Articles inform subscribers on Statism, Roman Catholicism, liberals (series of articles have been written on the WCC, the NCC; these were later published in booklet form). In 1953, the circulation of the journal was about sixty thousand copies a month.

CHAPTER V

THE FUTURE OF NAE

Some people and some organizations look to the past and sigh, "that was our Golden Age." And perhaps every person should be able to say of some period in the past, "I was in my glory then." Nevertheless, this should not be true of an organization; any person or any association expecting to serve, to grow, to create must plan for and expect a future greater than any of its past. And so it is with the National Association of Evangelicals!

NAE leadership may contemplate the early years of the Association and justifiably take pride in the accomplishments which they have helped to realize, in the evidence of the work of God in their midst, in the aid extended to thousands of persons and societies which have sought assistance and advice. They may be excused for exulting in the rapid growth, quick maturity, astounding accomplishments of the Association, especially regarding the work of the Commissions and the affiliated bodies such as National Religious Broadcasters, National Sunday School Association, and the Evangelical Foreign Missions Fellowship. Albeit, the achievements of yesterday do not assure the smiles of fortune tomorrow. If the NAE is to have a future of consequence, it must be a future of growth, of expansion, of daring. It must reckon with Satanic slueething; it may rest on the sustaining Saviour.

The Associate Executive Director of NAE, George L. Ford, writing just before the 1955 Convention a review of achievements stated,

A little over a decade ago evangelicals were divided, standing strongly for their individual convictions, but providing no common front. Prone to emphasize our distinctives, the lines of demarkation were overdrawn, leaving gaping holes through which the enemies of the Gospel found it easy to infiltrate. Political and religious totalitarianism, liberalism, and secularism pressed in upon us with appalling force.

Then we began to realize how serious were these threats. The growing conviction of the absolute necessity of a united evangelical witness finally found expression. Clearing away the debris of misunderstanding, of over-emphasis, of ignorance of the position and witness of our brethren, we found that evangelicals have one solid footing upon which to stand. We all accept the Bible as the infallible, authoritative Word of God. On this sure foundation we have been able to build a bulwark for the defense of the right of all to preach the Gospel. What no one group could have done, the many have been able to do. Maintaining our identity and essential distinctives, we have found our own testimony strengthened in joining hands in the common cause.

Understanding has grown as we have worked together. We have found that though we may build our portion of the wall strong, our entire position is in jeopardy unless it is properly joined with the work of those who labor next to us. Thus the work has gone on, embracing a geographical and a denominational spread that makes NAE the true evangelical voice of America.¹

"Thus the work has gone on. . . ." But what of tomorrow? Is it enough to be content with what has been? Fortunately, Mr. Ford anticipates the future.

¹ George L. Ford, "With Trowel and Spear The Work Goes On," United Evangelical Action, 14:8, April 1, 1955.

Concerning the coming years as far as the liberal councils are concerned, the feeling has been expressed a number of times by evangelicals that where there had been scorn for the NAE, there is now respect and not a little fear, i.e., fear that the stand and influence of NAE might nullify the work of the NCC and WCC. Overtures are being made to NAE leaders with promises of positions of leadership in the NCC. They have been rejected. While not all evangelicals hold that these liberal Councils are so dangerous as some other evangelicals would have all to believe, at the same time, it is well to examine their pronouncements and work and ambitions so that the evangelical witness can be raised as needed.

One of the greatest areas of work yet to be developed is the taking of NAE to the people. This has been done to a degree through the five regional offices, viz., New England (Boston); Southwest (Los Angeles); Upper Mid-West (Minneapolis); Mid-West (Chicago); and Northwest (Portland); Central (Topeka); Great Lakes, Eastern, and Ontario are just opening. However, NAE must reach into larger areas of life. Part of the answer to this is found in the new regional charter plan whereby the regional organizations are autonomous, thus relieving the home office of responsibility and financial burden; it also makes for greater effectiveness on the local level. A brochure has been issued entitled "How to Organize a Local Evangelical

Fellowship." This explains how to begin, to keep going, areas of endeavor, etc. The new plan is not strongly centralized because of the desire to avoid super-church tendencies. Its influence should be felt wherever the cause of Christ is in peril. And Satan masquerades in a variety of borrowed plumes!

NAE should not only defend but should initiate. Those there are who feel that in many cases United Evangelical Action has revealed too much of a negativistic outlook on the religious world. Of course, evangelicals must be warned of danger; surely they should be told of pending catastrophe unless they act. However, one can hardly picture God as on the defensive. Why not a more positive, aggressive attack? It is good to attempt to rout the enemy from his trenches, and for evangelicals to be dug in before the enemy realized that a spiritual Delaware has been crossed under the protective cloak of the Holy Spirit, but would it not be better strategy oftentimes to beat him to the draw? Let the NAE be the first to enter new areas of work, of service. In an address before the 1955 Convention, Dr. Ockenga expressed this feeling when he said that the NAE must take its place in the ecclesiastical movements of the day.

Areas into which NAE has not entered include a student affiliate on the seminary level. Why not institute such a body comparable to the liberal Inter-Seminary Movement? Why not advertise NAE in Christian Colleges and seminaries with

a view to recruiting new leadership? While the organization is young, yet it has maintained essentially the same leadership since its inception in 1943.

The Commission on Evangelical Social Action could profitably take a firm stand on the race problem in the United States. To our shame, Roman Catholics and liberal Protestants, though not so effective as they might be, have, at least, registered a position on the issue. Again, in his perusal of every issue of United Evangelical Action which has been published, the writer does not recall that any Negro has ever been elected to any position of leadership in the Association. A radical should change should be inaugurated here.

Finance has been one of the great problems of NAE. Yet a number of inactive Commissions have been maintained. A wiser expenditure of money and time could be realized if these inactive agencies were abolished. Their existence is hardly justifiable in the light of their fruitage. The realization of this has been evidenced by the reorganization in 1955 which partially solved this problem.

Other organizational changes reported at the 1955 Convention include the Undergirding Program--a plan by which laymen take an active role in fund-raising. Also, it was recommended to the Board of Administration that United Evangelical Action should be the financial and executive responsibility of NAE. Up to this time it has not enjoyed the

degree of integration which this new action will afford. A Publishing Committee whose chairman will be a member of the Board will effect this. Again, the Committee on Policy was discontinued, leaving the Board free to appoint and dissolve committees as it wills. Other changes involving the Commissions were reviewed in chapter four.

NAE is launching out into new areas. Though it represents about ten million Protestants, its work is hardly known in many areas; this will be remedied if two recommendations are carried out: it has been suggested, happily enough, that annual conventions should be moved about the country so that more people might more readily become familiar with the work and purpose of the Association. No Convention has been held anywhere but in the States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, and Nebraska. Neither is there a Regional Office in the South.

And President Savage desires that NAE should have better public relations. He feels that advertising should be done in widely circulated magazines, that news releases should be issued regularly, that newspapers should be made aware of NAE.

A great area of service is open this year to evangelicals who must act immediately, according to Mr. Ford. He declares that the threat of liberal ecumenicists to establish federated churches, to buy up property for allocation later

as population develops, and to erect downtown worship centers to replace regular Protestant churches and to be headquarters for Roman Catholics and Jews as well is very real. Unless it is combatted this year, he asserts, much of the religious liberty which Americans cherish will be gone.

So it can be seen that the National Association of Evangelicals is a great organization. In thirteen years, it has made itself known and its influence felt in the capitals of the world as well as at the grass-roots level in this country. What of the future? What else than that God shall show them greater things, if they be true to Him? What of the future? How other can it be but magnificent? Trusting Him Who called NAE into being, this Association united for evangelical action shall be led through every exigency the richer and greater for having endured. It will not be easy; NAE faces financial difficulties and reorganizational plans difficult to be borne, yet its leaders know that the task ahead of them is not nearly so great as the power behind them.

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